ambition, and jealousy; let us look into the hearts of their followers, and as we discover, besides the momentary excitement produced by the battle, nothing beyond a mercenary transaction, or the compulsory following of a chieftain—then our feelings change, and the scene is regarded with abhorrence and disgust.

It follows, that the conscience of two different individuals, or of the same individual at two different times, may *seem* to pronounce two different judgments on the same deed. We say *seem*, for in reality the two deeds are different, and the judgments differ, because the deeds, as presented to the conscience, are not the same. Thus, in the case which we have put, it is in the one instance the supposed devotedness and magnanimity that are commended; and in the other, it is upon the selfishness and cruelty of the parties that the condemnation is heaped. When Mercury stole Apollo's harp, Apollo was at first inclined to be angry; but afterwards forgot the crime in his admiration of the skill displayed in the perpetration of it. The Greeks, in this fable, furnish in the persons of their gods a true picture of human nature, and of the tendency of mankind to overlook the moral qualities of actions, and fix their attention on other features, fitted to call forth other than moral feelings.

From the general cause now referred to have proceeded, if we do not mistake, those irregularities and apparent inconsistencies in the decisions of conscience which have so puzzled and confounded ethical and metaphysical inquirers. The approval which was thought to have been given by the conscience to the widow burning herself on the funeral pile of her husband in India, and to deceit when successful among the ancient Spartans, and to the murder of children in the South Sea islands, and the exposing of the aged, and of helpless children in Africa—all originate in false views presented of the

devotedness of the widow, of the heroism of the Spartan youth who succeeds in compassing a difficult end, and of the misery to which the helpless, whether from youth or age, might be exposed, if left to drag out an existence for the sustenance of which no adequate provision could be made.

It is becoming evident, that the conscience may be in the breast of an individual, and exerting itself in a kind of way, while his whole moral judgments are utterly perverted.